

Your help is important.

The staff of the Indiana Department of Correction (DOC) is fully committed to insuring the safe, secure and humane supervision of the offenders committed to its care and custody. Of great concern to the agency is the potential for some offenders to harm themselves during their incarceration. In order to effectively protect these individuals, we need the assistance of you, their family and friends. We hope this pamphlet will provide you with important information about suicide so that you may help us to insure their safety.

J. David Donahue
Commissioner



be
smart.
choose
freedom.

For more information,
check us out at:

Indiana Department of Correction
www.in.gov/indcorrection/

or visit us at:
Road to Re-Entry
www.reentry.in.gov

Facility Phone Numbers

Branchville	(812) 843-5921
Camp Summit.....	(219) 326-1188
Chain O'Lake	(260) 636-3114
Correctional Industrial.....	(765) 778-8011
Edinburgh	(812) 526-8434
Henryville.....	(812) 294-4372
Indiana State Prison	(219) 874-7258
Indiana State Prison Minimum Security	(219) 872-8239
Indiana Women's Prison	(317) 639-2671
Indianapolis Juvenile	(317) 244-3387
Indianapolis Men's Work Release.....	(317) 232-1454
Indianapolis Women's Work Release	(317) 232-1443
Logansport Intake Diagnostic.....	(574) 753-5549
Madison	(812) 265-6154
Medaryville.....	(219) 843-4131
Miami.....	(765) 689-8920
North Central Juvenile	(574) 753-7571
Northeast Juvenile.....	(260) 497-7233
Pendleton	(765) 778-2107
Pendleton Juvenile	(765) 778-3778
Plainfield.....	(317) 839-2513
Plainfield Re-Entry Educational	(317) 839-7751
Putnamville	(765) 653-8441
Reception Diagnostic Center	(317) 839-7728
Rockville	(765) 569-3178
South Bend Juvenile	(574) 232-8808
South Bend Work Release	(574) 234-4094
Wabash Valley.....	(812) 398-5050
Westville	(317) 785-2511

Suicide Prevention

How
friends
and families
can help

Indiana Department of Correction
IGC-S, Room E334
302 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
Phone: (317) 232-5712



FAQs

Who is at risk of suicide?

Whether a first-time or repeat offender, people sent to jail or prison are particularly vulnerable to suicidal thoughts and actions. Adding to this potential are risk factors such as a history of mental health issues or substance abuse disorders. Other risk factors for offenders include social adjustment problems, serious illness, the recent loss of a loved one, divorce, separation, or a personal or family history of suicide attempts.

Why do offenders commit suicide?

People can be overwhelmed by the impact of arrest and incarceration.

Uncertainty of the future, fear of the unknown, guilt, remorse and worry can upset offenders emotionally. The day-to-day stress associated with incarceration; the lack of privacy; the loss of control over life decisions; the denial of an appeal or parole decision; isolation from friends and family; a divorce or similar event can all lead to depression. These factors can sometimes exceed the coping skills of vulnerable individuals and may lead an offender to attempt suicide to escape the emotional ups and downs they feel. Offenders may also feel bad about their crime or the effect it had on the victim and think suicide is way of making amends.

How does the DOC work to prevent suicide?

The DOC conducts a screening of each newly arrived offender for depression and other signs of emotional distress. We pay particular attention to those in high-risk categories;

the newly incarcerated; alcohol and substance abusers; those with mental health issues. To assist these offenders, the DOC provides medical and mental health treatment, substance abuse and HIV counseling, religious services and many other programs. Our staff also constantly monitors offenders and refers to our mental health staff those who are showing signs that they may be considering suicide.

How can I help?

Often offenders will be more open with a friend or family member. They may confide their intentions to you or give other indications that they may be considering suicide (please refer to the Suicide Warning Signs). If an offender tells you something that makes you think he/she might attempt suicide, it is important that you report it immediately to us so that we can help.

What if the offender makes me promise not to tell?

You must help your friend or relative by letting the DOC know so that we can provide them with attention and care. Telling you is their cry for help.

Who should I tell?

Before you leave the facility request to talk with a supervisor. Tell the supervisor what was said or done that concerned you about the offender's welfare.

What if I get the information in a letter or by telephone?

You should immediately call the facility where the offender is located and ask to speak to the offender's counselor or Unit Team.

A supervisor will make sure that the offender is evaluated by staff.

Suicide Warning Signs

- Change in usual mood or personality such as nervousness, outbursts of anger, impulsive or reckless behavior, or apathy about appearance or health
- Change in attention span
- Recent loss such as a divorce or death
- Change in sleep habits
- Change in diet, weight loss or gain
- Previous suicide attempts
- Talking about death or dying
- Loss of interest in normal activities
- Giving away prized possessions, making a will or other final arrangements
- Telling you secrets or confessing
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Saying goodbye to you and others
- Talking about how bad they are or have been
- Feeling hopeless
- Frequent irritability or unexplained crying
- Sadness

You should inform the offender's counselor or a supervisor ahead of time if you are going to bring the offender bad news. Divorce, deaths, and other bad news may be very difficult for an offender to bear. If we know these things have happened or will happen soon, we will be in a better position to assist the offender with pastoral or mental health counseling.